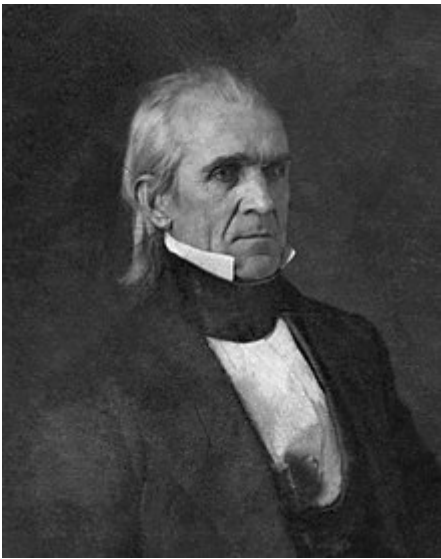


The Dark Horse



One unexpected side benefit from doing all this ancestral research is that it compels us to take a more vested interest in history. Before this, I couldn't name the 11th president of the United States, let alone know what he did while in office. Now, I can tell you all about him... all because I discovered that he is my niece's husband's 2nd cousin.

Wikipedia states: "James Knox Polk was the 11th president of the United States, serving from 1845 to 1849. He previously was the 13th Speaker of the House of Representatives and 9th governor of Tennessee. A protégé of Andrew Jackson, he was a member of the Democratic Party and an advocate of Jacksonian democracy. Polk is chiefly known for extending the territory of the United States through the Mexican–American War. During his presidency, the United States expanded significantly with the annexation of the Republic of Texas, the Oregon Territory, and the Mexican Cession following American victory in the Mexican–American War.

He was a dark horse candidate in the 1844 presidential election as the Democratic Party nominee; he entered his party's convention as a potential nominee for vice president but emerged as a compromise to head the ticket when no presidential candidate could secure the necessary two-

thirds majority. In the general election, Polk defeated Henry Clay of the rival Whig Party.

Historians have praised Polk for meeting every major domestic and foreign policy goal he had set during his single term. After a negotiation fraught with the risk of war, he reached a settlement with Great Britain over the disputed Oregon Country, the territory, for the most part, being divided along the 49th parallel. He provoked a war with Mexico in an attempt to expand the United States and succeeded in doing so, as it resulted in Mexico's cession of nearly all the American Southwest. The same year, he achieved his other major goal, re-establishment of the Independent Treasury system. True to his campaign pledge to serve only one term, Polk left office in 1849 and returned to Tennessee, where he died three months after leaving the White House.

Though he is relatively obscure today, scholars have ranked Polk favorably for his ability to promote and achieve the major items on his presidential agenda, despite limiting himself to a single term."

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